



Rural Partners...

a newsletter of the Indiana Rural Development Council

Fall, 2000

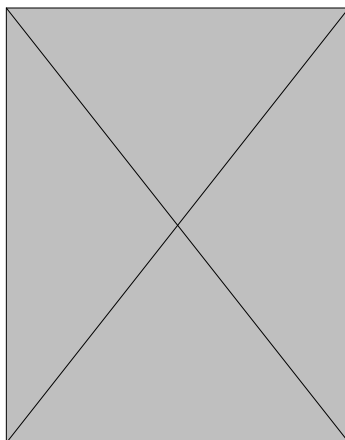
IN-map Puts Counties On Indiana's Digital

County government offices all over the state are jumping at the chance to create a presence on IN-map's digital map. Office holders are realizing that providing information and services to their constituents electronically is the wave of the future —

and that's where IN-map comes in.

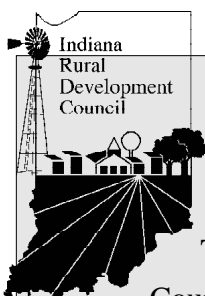
IN-map, formerly known as the Indiana Digital County Network (INDICO), is creating quite a buzz across the Hoosier state by changing its name and its focus. More county officeholders have requested IN-map's services than ever before, indicating a real need for local governments to more efficiently share information with their constituents and between state and local government offices. Many officeholders also have indicated their desire to provide fee-based services, such as public access to records and geographic information systems, electronically.

IN-map's no charge web site development and hosting is very attractive to governments just beginning the process of creating an on-line presence. Content development liaisons help government offices decide what information should be displayed on a site, then help create it or develop it.



IN-map is working closely with the Purdue Cooperative Extension Service to assist with connectivity to the Access Indiana state network. In approximately one-third of Indiana's counties, governments can share the cost of dedicated network access with their county Extension offices. This can reduce costs by approximately 60 percent.

Look for more information on IN-map at the upcoming IRDC annual meeting. You can check out their web site at www.indico.net, or call IN-map directly at (317) 233-8874 for more information.



Mission

The Indiana Rural Development Council is a partnership of local, state, federal, profit and not-for-profit stakeholders serving Indiana communities. The IRDC's purpose is to coordinate efforts of citizens and governments to meet the economic and social needs of rural Indiana.

Goals

- To provide a means to address rural issues;
- To seek community input to identify problems;
- To establish partnerships to find solutions;
- To enable partners to take action; and
- To educate the public on rural issues.



LOCAL SECTOR

William H. Graham* - Chair
Mayor, City of Scottsburg
David Hess
Elkhart County Administrator
Richard M. Ullrich, Jr.
Mayor, City of Aurora
Michael Schultz (a)
Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission

STATE SECTOR

Robert Clark
Indiana State Department of Health
Joseph E. Kernan*
Indiana Lieutenant Governor
James Segedy
Ball State University
Jayne Stites (a)
Indiana Department of Commerce Mainstreet Coordinator

FEDERAL SECTOR

John Thompson*
USDA Rural Development
William Shaw
U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development
Robert Peacock
USDA Farm Service Agency
Janice Wolfe (a)
U.S. Small Business Administration

FOR PROFIT SECTOR

Randy Haymaker*
Hoosier Energy Rural Electric Cooperative, Inc.
James Rice
SIECO, Inc.
Steven Seifert
Bonar Group
Carol Lewis (a)
The Forest Discovery Center

NOT-FOR-PROFIT SECTOR

Judy Gray*
Orange County Economic Development Partnership
David Rice
Southern Indiana Rural Development Partnership
Roslyn Amor
Farm Counseling Project
Susan A. Craig (a)
Southeastern Indiana Regional Planning Commission

LEGISLATIVE & SPECIAL APPOINTMENTS

Senator Johnny Nugent (R), Lawrenceburg
Senator Richard D. Young, Jr. (D), Milltown
Representative William Friend (R), Macy
Representative Claire Leuck (D), Fowler
Lane A. Ralph, Representing Senator Richard Lugar's Office
Phil Lehmkuhler, Representing Senator Evan Bayh's Office
Luke Clipenger, Representing Congressman Baron Hill's Office
Brandt Herschman, Representing Congressman Steve Buyer's Office
Robert Kovach, Governor's Representative
Kermit Burrous, Past Chair

IRDC STAFF

Wendy J. Dant, Executive Director
Donna Johnson, Administrative Assistant

*Executive Committee (a) Alternate Member

A Message from the Executive Director

Wendy J. Dant

Earlier this year, the Indiana Rural Development Council's (IRDC) 2000 Work Plan set up task forces and activities to address issues affecting Indiana's rural communities. The nine focus areas are:

- Community Visitation Program

- Housing Task Force
- Environmental Infrastructure Working Group
- Unified Plan Task Force
- Rural Communities at Work
- Leadership Development Task Force
- Land Use Task Force
- Marketing & Education Committee
- 2002 NRDP Conference Committee

You will find updates on the progress of these task forces and activities included throughout the newsletter, but I'd like to start with the unified plan, land use and leadership development.

Unified Plan Task Force

In May, this group hosted a workshop to evaluate the 1998 Unified Plan. Approximately 45 community and government leaders commented on five areas of concern identified as *in need of attention* and *critical to the success* of rural communities. These issues include healthcare, infrastructure, housing, job creation/retention and telecommunications. Through this Unified Plan, the IRDC hopes to achieve a more focused direction for our rural areas. The group plans to conduct a series of public hearings to gain consensus on the concepts and ideas generated in the discussions.

Land Use Task Force

Working with the Indiana Land Resources Council, this group is organizing resources available to local leaders facing land use decisions in their communities. By preparing a Resource Directory, the group will assist

decision makers with researching their options. The group also sponsored a Land Use Tour in September, in conjunction with Indiana Farm Bureau, the Indiana Beef Cattle Association, Indiana Association of Soil & Water Conservation Districts and the Office of the Commissioner of Agriculture.

Leadership Development Task Force

As part of the 2000 Work Plan, the IRDC is focusing on leadership development in rural Indiana. On June 21, the Task Force held a meeting of leadership professionals from around the state to discuss motivational techniques and methods for training rural leaders. By identifying needs not currently being met, the task force is formulating a plan to address these leadership development issues in the rural areas.

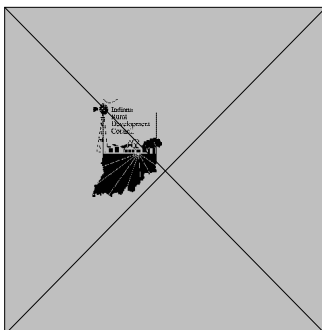
I want to thank all of the IRDC members who have accepted the challenge of working together to address rural issues. The Indiana Rural Development Council was formed to provide a forum for rural issues to emerge and solutions to develop. Now, communities all across Indiana are benefiting from the partnerships that have been created. Please join us, and become active in working towards our successes!

Wendy

Save the Date!!

**IRDC Annual Conference
November 15-16, 2000**

St. Vincent Marten House, Indianapolis



**Indiana Rural
Development Council
Home Page:**
www.state.in.us/irdc

**National Rural
Development Partnership
Home Page:**
[www.rurdev.usda.gov/
nrdp/index.html](http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/nrdp/index.html)

Sister City Proclamation Assists City and Town

Last year, the City of Scottsburg and the Town of Fowler announced a partnership benefitting both communities. They entered into a "Sister City" relationship, based on the international program that links leaders from similar communities, allowing them to share information about

programs, projects and management options.

Scottsburg and Fowler each adopted a proclamation and a set of goals and objectives by which the partnership will develop. Both communities have met the Sister Cities concept with great enthusiasm.

"Our hope is that both Fowler and Scottsburg will form a very positive relationship," said Scottsburg Mayor Bill Graham. "Each will enjoy another valuable resource to utilize in a variety of ways, such as shopping for equipment or handling a local problem quickly and effectively."

In May, the communities participated in an exchange of visits.

On May 5, Fowler department heads, chamber leaders, health care providers and civic organization officers spent the day meeting with their counterparts in Scottsburg. On May 12, the Scottsburg leaders visited Fowler. Each was given a tour of the other community, and issues specific to that community were discussed.

"We feel we can learn just as much from Fowler as they can learn from us," said Mayor Graham.

The partnership has already provided opportunities to share in each other's activities. Scottsburg officials were invited to a function of the Fowler Chamber of Commerce, and Fowler officials have volunteered for Scottsburg festivals.

For more information on the Sister City agreement, contact Mayor Graham at (812) 752-4319.



IRDC Community Visitations Moving Forward

The IRDC's Community Visitation Program provides assistance to communities by arranging visits to coordinate an exchange of issues and brainstorming among citizens. This method of allowing key problem areas and resource needs to surface in an informal,

open setting is being provided to communities throughout the state in 2000.

Requests for visits were sent directly to 185 communities, and the program was advertised in the IACT newsletter. Eleven communities responded with excellent applications. Although we would like to help each community, we do not have the resources to conduct all of the visits this year. We chose five communities for visits this fall:

1. Town of Bloomingdale (Parke Co.)
2. City of Dunkirk (Jay/Blackford Co.)
3. Town of Elizabeth (Harrison Co.)
4. Town of Grabill (Allen Co.)
5. Town of Laurel (Franklin Co.)

The visit teams consists of 12-16 IRDC members. The team members facilitate open discussions about the strengths, needs, opportunities, threats and dreams the residents perceive. After each visit, the IRDC team develops a report for the elected officials. This report contains a summary of topics and issues shared during the day, and offers action steps and available resources to address issues that surfaced during the visit. These resources are categorized as: *internal*, what the community can do on its own without outside assistance; *regional*, looking at county and area assistance; and *state/federal*, which brings in additional technical and financial assistance.

Look for a "community visitation recap" in the next issue of ***Rural Partners***.

French Lick to Host National Rural Development Conference

The IRDC is one of 37 states active in the National Rural Development Partnership (NRDP), a group that works on rural development issues across the country. Indiana will take the spotlight in 2002, when the IRDC hosts the NRDP's Annual Leadership

Conference.

After reviewing local interest from around the state, the 2002 Planning Committee recommended the IRDC host this event in French Lick Springs, tentatively scheduled for August 25-28, 2002. The Planning Committee is working with area leaders to showcase the best of rural Indiana. If you would like to assist in these efforts, please contact the IRDC office at (317) 232-8776 for more information.

IHART - Housing Assistance

Indiana Housing Assistance Review Team (IHART) is a program implemented to assist Indiana communities in developing affordable housing projects for residents. This cooperative work group

includes representatives from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development; U.S. Department of Agriculture – Rural Development; Indiana Housing Finance Authority; Indiana Department of Commerce; Federal Home Loan Bank of Indianapolis; and IRDC's Housing Task Force.

The IHART process is designed to provide assistance to potential applicants for funding housing projects. "IHART recognizes there is no longer a single funding program available for housing projects in rural communities," said William Shaw, community builder with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and chairman of the Housing Task Force. Contact the IRDC (317) 232-8776 for more information.



USDA Rural Development Helps Rural Communities Fund Needed Facilities

Need a fire truck? A child care facility? Community building? Health care facility? These are just a few of the community projects the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Rural Development division can provide financial assistance for in rural areas and towns of not more than

20,000 people.

Loans are available for public entities such as municipalities, counties and special purpose districts. Nonprofit corporations and Indian tribes may also receive loan assistance. Borrowers must be unable to be able obtain funding from other sources at reasonable rates; have legal authority to borrow and repay loans, be able to borrow and pledge security and construct, operate and maintain the facility or services; and be financially sound. The maximum term on all loans is 40 years and the interest rate is set periodically based on current market yields for municipal obligations.

Community facility loans may be used to construct, enlarge or improve facilities for health care, public safety and public services. Funds may be used to purchase fire trucks, ambulances or emergency communications equipment; build fire and rescue multi-service centers, police stations and jails; and to pay the necessary costs connected with these facilities. Public service facilities include community buildings, child care centers, courthouses, libraries, schools and industrial parks. Funds also may be used for road improvements, or to acquire interest in land, leases and rights of way necessary to develop these public service facilities.

If you are interested in learning more about this program, contact your nearest USDA Rural Development Office or call Gregg Delp, Community Programs Director, at (317) 290-3100, ext. 431The

The people who get on in this world are the people who get up and look for the circumstances they want, and, if they can't find them, make them.

— George Bernard Shaw



Indiana Main Street Awarded National Pilot Program

Three rural Indiana communities participate in small business development project

Three rural Indiana communities are helping lead the way

for small business development in Indiana.

In July, the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) and the National Trust for Historic Preservation (NTHP) chose Bedford, Goshen and Lafayette to participate in a pilot program bringing together the resources of the two agencies.

The SBA and the National Main Street Center of the NTHP formed an alliance in April to encourage economic revitalization of local commercial districts in rural Indiana cities and towns with populations under 50,000 and urban neighborhoods in Boston, Mass. The program will merge the various business development resources of the SBA with the tenets of the Main Street program.

Jayne Stites, director of Indiana Main Street, and Janice Wolfe, state director for SBA, continue to work closely with the pilot communities to develop a program model that all Indiana Main Street communities can adapt for their own development efforts. Both Stites and Wolfe are members of the IRDC's governing board.

The three pilot communities were selected by a committee of business, civic and historic preservation representatives, including Indiana Rural Development Council staff. They were chosen based on how well their development priorities coincided with those of SBA and Indiana Main Street, program organization, community support for small business and downtown development efforts, and success of past development projects. The results of this project will be presented during the National Town Meeting in Indianapolis in April 2001.

For more information on the program, contact Jayne Stites at (317) 232-8912.



EIWG Assists with Environmental Infrastructure Projects

The Environmental Infrastructure Working Group (EIWG), a task force of the IRDC, meets each month to provide a coordinated service to rural communities. The group has been successful in helping communities identify funding sources for

water and wastewater projects.

Rural leaders can find themselves lost in the maze of state and federal funding programs, and EIWG provides a place for them to turn for assistance. This task force consists of representatives from various state and federal funding and technical assistance agencies.

The program brings together representatives from these programs to provide “one-stop” shopping for community projects. The face-to-face meeting provides for early planning of projects, as well as coordination

of multiple funding sources. Community leaders gain a better understanding of the options available, and program representatives learn of projects prior to the request for assistance.

The Town of Beverly Shores, located along Lake Michigan, is a community of 500 households, each served by private wells. During last year’s drought conditions, many homeowners experienced water contamination and major shortage problems. Town leaders recently met with EIWG to explore options for funding a water distribution system throughout the town. Preliminary estimates for the proposed water system are in the range of \$5 to \$7 million.

The community learned that planning money could be available from two state sources, and long-term construction financing can be offered from the USDA Rural Development or Indiana’s State Revolving Loan Fund. The community left the meeting with a plan of action to help address this quality of life need for its residents.



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IRDC Rural Partners

The deadline for the fall issue is Wednesday, October 4.

Submit articles to the IRDC at the address above or e-mail to Wendy Dant at wdant@commerce.state.in.us.